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Toto language

Toto is a Sino-Tibetan language spoken on the border of India and Bhutan, by the tribal Toto people in Totopara, West Bengal along the border with Bhutan. It is also spoken in Subhapara, Dhunchipara, and Panchayatpara hillocks on India-Bhutan border in Jalpaiguri district, West Bengal (*Ethnologue*).

Toto	
Region	West Bengal
Ethnicity	Toto
Native speakers	1,411 (2014)[1]
Language family	Sino-Tibetan - Brahmaputran ? - Dhimalish **Toto**
Writing system	Bengali script, Devanagari, Toto
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`txo`
Glottolog	`toto1302 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/toto1302)`[2]

Contents

Status

Toto is listed as a critically endangered language by UNESCO, with perhaps 1,000 speakers.[3] However, most families in the community speak Toto at home. Most children learn Toto at home, although they use Bengali in school.

Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) set out to conduct a study on language of the primitive Toto tribe, whose population has dwindled to 1,536, they did not realize that the language is more endangered than the tribe itself. Researchers and even the members of Toto community admit that the language is under threat and influence of other languages, particularly Nepali and Bengali, is increasing day by day. [4]

The Himalayan Languages Project is working on the first grammatical sketch of Toto. Himalayan Languages Project have arguably contributed more to advancing Tibeto-Burman linguistics than all other working scholars combined. George van Driem outlines the contributions of linguistics, archaeology and genetics to the population history of the greater Himalayan region. He emphasizes the role of genetics in the study of Tibeto-Burman linguistics.[5]

Phonology

Vowels

Toto Language consists of 25 segmental Phonemes of which 19 are consonants and 6 are vowels. The phonemes of this language are as follows: Vowels: These are 6 vowel phonemes in Toto language. They can be classified horizontally into three as front unrounded, central unrounded and back rounded vowels and vertically as close, close-mid, open-mid and open.

The following minimal pairs establish the phonetics status of the vowel

/i/~/u/

/Jiya/ 'rat'

/Juya/ 'bird'

/i/~/e/

/iŋ/ 'brother in-law'

/eŋ/ 'ginger'

/ciwa/ 'tear'

/cewa/ 'cut' (cloth)

/i/~/a/

/guJi/ 'owl'

/guJa/ 'pocket'

/nico/ 'fire'

/naco/ 'two'

/e/~/o/

/je/ 'grass'

/jo/ 'breast'

/e/~/a/

/lepa/ 'brain'

/lapa/ 'jungle betel leaf'

/kewa/ 'birth'

/kawa/ 'sound'

There are eight diphthongs realized in Toto language. These are /ei/, /ai/, /oi/, /ui/, /əi/, /eu/, /au/ and /ou/. Diphthong /ui/ occurs in all positions, /eu/ occurs initial and medial positions, /ai/, /oi/, /əi/, and /ei/ occur medial and final positions. While /ou/ and /au/ occur only in the medial positions.[1] Furthermore, with

regard to consonants, Toto has an inventory of ten obstruents, eight of which are contrastive in voicing. Toto also distinguishes the voiceless obstruents /t/ and /p/ with its aspirated equivalents /tʰ/ and /pʰ/, respectively. [1]

Consonants

		Bilabial		Alveolar		Palatal	Velar	Glottal
		plain	aspirated	plain	aspirated			
Stop	voiceless	p	pʰ	t	tʰ	c	k	
	voiced	b		d		ɟ	g	
Fricative				s				h
Nasal		m		n			ŋ	
Approximant				l		j	w	
Trill				r				

Vocabulary

Below are some Toto words from van Driem (1995), who uses these words to suggest that Toto may be a Sal language.[6]

- aŋ- 'to drink'
- bɔcɔŋ 'shoulder'
- yoti 'cooking pot' (second syllable), cf. Dzongkha *dî* 'jug'
- uŋtí 'seed'
- haní 'today'
- tarí 'moon'
- lip- 'fall' (cf. Benedict's PTB *lip 'dive, sink, drown')
- tɛ́bo 'big' (first syllable)
- así 'shit'
- daŋkre 'right' (vs. 'left')
- buibé 'stomach' (first syllable); the second syllable <-be> is cognate with Toto *biyá* 'meat'
- biyá 'meat'
- wɔteŋ 'bamboo species' (first syllable), Nepali *ḍhuṅgre ko ghās*
- maʔoŋ 'paddy'
- bagreŋ 'wing'
- saní 'sun'
- jâr- 'stand'

- anji 'yesterday'
- böidi 'navel'
- lâru- 'bring'
- em- 'to shit'
- jiŋ- 'sleep'
- cici 'urine'
- kiya 'dog'
- miŋ 'name'
- daŋ 'horn'
- maibe 'flower'
- pű̆yɔ 'snake'
- luŋtü 'stone'
- lɛbɛ́ 'tongue'
- maŋbü- 'to dream'
- nanuŋ 'ear'
- mico 'eye'
- ŋaya 'fish'
- musa 'body hair'
- ka 'I'
- taŋpa 'sole of the foot'
- paká 'pig'
- nati 'thou'
- satáŋ 'tooth'

- si- 'die'
- ca- 'eat'
- the- 'be sweet, taste sweet'
- toise 'mango' (suffix: <-se>)
- daŋse 'jackfruit' (suffix: <-se>)
- sâ- 'kill'
- dai- 'dig'
- köitü 'egg'
- yuŋ- 'sit, stay'
- ti 'water'
- mití 'tear'
- totí 'spit'
- wɛtí 'rain'
- yutí 'blood'
- yutí 'milk'
- dikɔ́ 'buffalo'
- ü- 'come down, descend'
- ŋɛtɔ́ŋ 'neck'
- to pa- 'weave'
- kai- 'cry'
- ŋɔká 'monkey'
- jüwɔ́ 'mouse, rat'

Pronouns

The Toto personal pronouns are (van Driem 1995):[6]

	singular	plural
first person	ka	kibi
second person	nati	natibi
third person	aku	abi

Numerals

The Toto numerals are (van Driem 1995):[6]

English numeral	bare stem for counting	counting humans	counting animals	inanimate objects
one	i	iccɔ	ippu	icce
two	ni	niso	nipu	nise
three	suŋ	sumcɔ	suŋpu	suŋse
four	di	dicɔ	dipu	dise
five	ŋa	ŋacɔ	ŋapu	ŋase
six	tu	tukcɔ	tukpu	tuse
seven	ni	nícɔ	nípu	níse
eight	yâ	yɛ́cɔ	yɛ́pu	yɛ́se
nine	ku	kucɔ	kupu	kuse
ten	tâ	tâcɔ	tâpu	tâse
eleven	eghâra	eghârcɔ	eghârpu	eghârse
twelve	bâra	bârcɔ	bârpu	bârse
twenty	ikai	ikai cɔ	ikai pu	ikai se
twenty-one	ikai-so i	ikai-so iccɔ	ikai-so ippu	ikai-so icce
thirty	ikai-so tâ	ikai-so tâcɔ	ikai-so tâpu	ikai-so tâse
forty	nikai	nikai cɔ	nikai pu	nikai se
fifty	nikai-so tâ	nikai-so tâcɔ	nikai-so tâpu	nikai-so tâse
sixty	suŋkai	suŋkai cɔ	suŋkai pu	suŋkai se

■

Writing System

An alphabetic script developed for the language by community elder and author Dhaniram Toto was published in 2015, and has seen limited but increasing use in literature, education, and computing; a

Toto alphabet	
Type	Alphabet

proceproposal for encoding this script was accepted by the Unicode technical committee on October 8, 2019, and is currently awaiting ISO balloting.[7][8] Prior to the publication of this script, Dhaniram Toto and other members of the community (whose literacy rate as per sample survey carried out in 2003 was just 33.64 per cent) penned books and poems in the Bengali script. [4]

Languages	Toto
Creator	Dhaniram Toto
Published	2015
Direction	Left-to-right
ISO 15924	Toto, 294

See also

- Dhimalish comparative vocabulary list (Wiktionary)

Notes

1. "Languages of India" (http://languageinindia.com/june2014/chibiramtotophonology1.pdf) (PDF). Retrieved 2015-02-08.|
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Toto" (http://glottolog. org/resource/languoid/id/toto1302). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Ben Doherty (April 29, 2012). "India's tribal people fast becoming lost for words" (http://www.th eage.com.au/world/indias-tribal-people-fast-becoming-lost-for-words-20120429-1xted.html). *The Age*. Retrieved 2015-02-08.
4. Singh, Shiv Sahay (1 August 2014). "Toto language more endangered than tribe" (https://www. thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/toto-language-more-endangered-than-tribe/article6270931.e ce). *The Hindu*. Retrieved 18 December 2019.
5. Languages of the Himalayas: An Ethnolinguistic Handbook of the Greater Himalayan Region Containing an Introduction to the Symbiotic Theory of Language
6. van Driem, George. 1995. *The Ṭoṭo language of the Bhutanese duars*. Paper presented at ICSTLL 28.
7. Anderson, Deborah (27 September 2019). "L2/19-330: Proposal for encoding the Toto script in the SMP of the UCS" (https://www.unicode.org/L2/L2019/19330-toto-script.pdf) (PDF). Retrieved 18 December 2019.
8. "Proposed New Characters: The Pipeline" (https://unicode.org/alloc/Pipeline.html). Unicode Consortium. Retrieved 18 December 2019.

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- van Driem, George. 1995. *The Ṭoṭo language of the Bhutanese duars*. Paper presented at ICSTLL 28.

External links

- India's Tribal People Fast Becoming Lost for Words (http://www.smh.com.au/world/indias-tribal-people-fast-becoming-lost-for-words-20120429-1xt06.html)
- About Toto People (http://wbnorthbengaldev.gov.in/HtmlPage/toto.aspx)
- Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas)
- World Oral Literature Project (http://www.oralliterature.org/)
- Ethnologue: Languages of the World, 16th Edition (2009) (http://www.ethnologue.com/)
- [http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011-documents/lsi/lsi_wb/5TOTO.pdf